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# *Conditions in Occupied Territories*

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## **SLAVE LABOUR AND DEPORTATION**

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## Foreword

One of the outstanding characteristics of Axis behaviour is selfishness with its accompanying disregard of all other peoples. This selfishness has been deliberately cultivated by the German and Japanese governments. Axis nationals have been brought to regard their own state as the only possessor of rights and the good of that state as an end that justifies all means. Thus selfishness becomes an ideal and callous brutality a virtue.

In no activity of the Axis can this denial of even the most elementary rights of others be more clearly seen than in its efforts to recruit the manpower of the occupied territories. From the account which follows, an account which is selective rather than exhaustive, it emerges that in this recruitment the Axis has pursued two purely selfish aims: first, the maintenance and increase of its war production; second, the weakening or destruction of the peoples of enemy countries. In pursuit of these aims the negative characteristic of callousness and the active characteristic of brutality have been exhibited in the highest degree.

The workers of France have been faced with the wicked alternative of working for their traditional enemy or denying perhaps a son his chance of release from a prisoner-of-war camp. In Poland men are treated as animals, rounded up and herded into cattle trucks. Throughout occupied territories, East and West, the same traits appear. But the people of these territories face their ordeal with courage unimpaired. They take every risk to resist recruitment. Where this proves impossible, they resolutely set themselves to another task: slow and sullen in their master's work, they remain sharply poised for action against the oppressor, action that, when the time comes, can widen even the smallest crack in the German home front into a gaping breach. Only too often they have given their lives in opposing the Axis. They know the danger and they accept it. A Greek newspaper published in Athens in 1941 on the eve of the German attack on Greece, when her aggressive intentions were already only too evident, has admirably stated the United Nations attitude. Speaking of the Germans, the paper said, "They want to lead us like cattle across the lands of Europe, sometimes to the West to till their fields, sometimes to the North to fill gaps in their industries, from which they alone are to benefit, in which we can have no share. But we believe, not that there must be nations which oppress and nations which are oppressed, but that all nations have the same right to live."

DIRK M. DE MAN,  
*Chairman, United Nations Information  
Organisation, London.*

14th June, 1944.



# Slave Labour and Deportation

SLAVERY has been brought back to the world. Millions of men, women and children have been driven into servitude by the Axis invaders. Land, wealth, produce—these were not enough; human tribute has been exacted by the Axis with calculated ferocity.

This levy on manpower of the occupied countries has served the twofold plan of feeding the totalitarian war-machine and of weakening the national vitality of the countries to be ruled by a victorious Axis or to be fought against in the next war, which the Axis powers plan if they lose this one. It is a plan that serves both the immediate and the long-term policies of the "Master Race".

In the last war the official plan for the systematic exploitation of the resources of the occupied countries, both as regards manual labour and raw materials, was drawn up and put into execution in the Ministry for War by one of the magnates of German industry, Dr. Walter Rathenau, chairman of the A.E.G. (*Allgemeine Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft*).

In a letter to General von Ludendorff, Chief of the General Staff, dated September 16, 1916, Rathenau asked for a "solution of the problem of Belgian labour which, regardless of questions of international prestige, can only be effected if the 700,000 workers available there can be brought to the home market, even if this should destroy the American aid scheme".

The supply of labour in this war, too, has become one of Germany's most urgent and difficult problems.

"Owing to the terrible threat to our Continent", declared Dr. Stothfang, Ministerial Councillor, in a speech quoted in the Nazi press on February 21, 1944, "the total mobilisation of European manpower has become a fateful necessity which no European nation is permitted to shirk and remain unpunished".

The organ of the German coal trade, *Deutsche Kohlenzeitung*, on February 8, 1944, deploring the shortage of workers, lamented that it would not be so easy to get workers from the Government General (occupied Poland) as "that great reservoir of human beings has been exhausted and their physical qualities deteriorated".

Recourse must be had to foreign countries for labour, argued the *Bremer Nachrichten* (February 13, 1944), because "not hundreds or thousands, but a few million workers are needed, if German armament production is to be further increased".

Hitler himself on February 24, 1943, declared: "We shall not hesitate a single second to call upon the countries which are responsible for the outbreak of the war to do their bit in the fatal struggle. We shall not scruple about foreign lives at a time when such hard sacrifices are expected from our own lives".

Gauleiter Fritz Sauckel, specially appointed General Controller of Labour in March, 1942 to solve Germany's labour problem, proclaimed in a speech at Amsterdam in January, 1943 the conqueror's right to use all the power he needs for his own preservation.

The same Dr. Stothfang already mentioned told an interviewer from the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (February 8, 1944) that "Germany finds herself in an emergency situation and is therefore justified in mobilising the necessary manpower in occupied countries, regardless of the regulations of international law".

Germany's attitude to international law was the same in the last war as was shown by the deportations from Belgium.

In the Belgian zone subject to the military authorities and martial law these deportations to Germany were carried out on orders issued by the General



Headquarters under date October 3, 1916, while in the rest of occupied Belgium, which was subject to the authority of the civil government, they were based on a new interpretation of an order dated May 15, 1916, whereby the "offence" of refusing work was to be tried by the German military tribunals and the penalty of the transfer of the delinquent to the place of his forced labour was introduced.

The Prussian War Ministry in an Order (No. 290/10/16, dated October 7, 1916) signed by Staff Colonel von Wyisberg, tried to justify the plunder of Belgian factories and the deportation of workers by stating: "We must not be deterred by any objections under international law, these must yield to the inescapable necessity of placing every worker in German power at the disposal of war economy for the most productive use".

The German plan contemplates the continuance of slave labour even after the end of the war. In a speech at Klagenfurt in April, 1942, quoted by D.N.B. on the 25th of that month, the Reich Minister of Economic Affairs, Funk, said: "After the victorious conclusion of the war, the problem of war indebtedness could be solved in a relatively short time, since we can count on cheap labour and raw materials for the German economic system on a large scale. The price of the goods manufactured in this way will be considerably lower than the general German price level. The difference thus resulting will serve to redeem our war debts and thus also to conserve the value of our currency. In this way the high standard of living of the German people will be ensured".

The application of the compulsory labour decrees in individual countries is described in the following pages. A familiar pattern will be found. At first, propaganda—press, poster and radio—was used to cajole the people of the occupied territories to enrol for labour service. The propaganda was frequently based on sheer fraud; thus, Danish workers found that the contracts they had signed were altered after they had left for Germany. Separation allowances promised to all married men proved to be restricted to those working in certain building, military and metal undertakings. Women were lured by the prospect of being near their prisoner-of-war husbands only to be sent to work in another part of Germany without further news of their menfolk.

When propaganda proved ineffective, pressure was applied. Compulsory registration was introduced. Unemployed persons who failed to volunteer for work for Germany were deprived of relief and ration cards. Registration was at first only for employment in the occupied country, but was soon extended to include employment in Germany or in any other territory under Axis control. To sharpen the spur of hunger and want, unemployment was deliberately created by the withdrawal of materials and fuel from factories, by concentration of industries and the lengthening of hours, which prevented employers from maintaining or increasing their staffs by using the shift system.

Threats were liberally used. An appeal to French students contained in a Vichy communique of August, 1943, tried to reassure them that those sent to Germany would be given work according to their capacities, but added that if they did not report they would be employed as unskilled workers: in any event, if they did not comply with the regulations they would be excluded from universities and would expose themselves to penal servitude.

Governor Frank of the "Protectorate" of Czechoslovakia in February, 1943, declared: "From now on the Czech bourgeoisie as a whole and the so-called better classes will be drawn in and harnessed to their full capacity to work. Shirkers will be apprehended and will be given opportunities at another place on their refusal to work".

The Nazi-controlled Norwegian radio, on February 26, 1943, trying to "explain" the compulsory labour regulations argued that "in Norway there are thousands upon thousands of Norwegians who are either not working full time or who are working on tasks not essential or which could be postponed. From these sources Norway will and must produce the labour reserves which have to be thrown in to save Europe in her hour of danger".



These measures, however, met with so much resistance that the results were not considered satisfactory. Labour recruitment became a matter of conscription and mass deportation, often with extreme penalties for resistance.

The *Danziger Vorposten* of January 28, 1943, states: "The Special Court at Bydgoszcz has sentenced to death Jan Kazimierz Lanski, aged 19, described as harmful to the community. He had refused several times to work for the Germans, and escaped from the places of work assigned to him by the Labour Office".

Round-ups and mass arrests were organised by the Germans in streets, churches, entertainment gatherings. These began in Poland as early as October, 1939. Typical of these round-ups are those referred to by the *Tribune de Genève* on February 24, 1943:

"In France, in large cities, raids are organised in both cafes and cinemas. During performances, officials inspect the identity cards of all the spectators. Those between the ages of 21 and 31, or those fulfilling age requirements for labour service, are taken to the police station, where their activities are examined. With these inspections taking place in trains and hotels, sometimes even in apartments, the country is the only place where one can hope to escape the new obligations."

The total of foreign slaves working in Germany cannot accurately be gauged, but must reach seven million. The human misery and suffering contained in that colossal figure is hard to appreciate. Families purposely separated, homes destroyed, relatives taken away by a power that wishes them nothing but ill, often just disappearing without notice, failing to return perhaps from some every-day errand; long journeys under inhuman conditions, that end with exhausting labour, hunger and even torture.

The worst treatment is reserved for Jews and Slavs. A picture through neutral eyes of conditions endured by Russian workers in Germany was given by the Swiss newspaper *Der Landbote* of June 2, 1943:

"Exclusively women workers from the Ukraine are at present in Weihestephane. Their ages vary from 17 to 45. Many of the women are married and many have had to leave their small children behind in Russia. Their day's work is fairly hard. This model concern extends over 40 hectares and the women from the Ukraine have to look after the fields and stables and do everything themselves. They work 11 hours a day but when they have knocked off for the evening there are further duties awaiting them in the kitchen, for they have to do their own catering. As can be imagined their menu is simple. According to the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* they have cabbage soup with potatoes practically every day and the second course, too, consists mainly of potatoes.

"Their wages are modest. At the beginning several weeks' wages were retained so that the women could be supplied with the most urgent garments made from remnants. The Eastern women workers are not supplied with any stockings and throughout the winter they were forced to bind pieces of sackcloth and rags round their legs".

Another picture is given by the official rules for these "Eastern workers" as quoted in the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* (November 4, 1943):

"These workers must wear an 'Ost' badge on the right breast of their clothes. They must not leave their camps during black-out hours. From April to September curfew hours for them are from 20.00 to 06.00 hours. They must not use public transport. They must not attend performances of a cultural, ecclesiastical, entertaining or social nature intended for German workers. They must not enter inns or shops and are forbidden to have contact with persons of other nationalities. They are strictly forbidden to associate with Russian prisoners of war."

However, an order of the Council of Ministers for the defence of the Reich, dated March 25, 1944, followed by an executive order of March 26 issued by the



German General Trustee for the Direction of Labour, purports to put an end to the difference between the treatment of Eastern and other foreign workers. This may well be a result of recent military developments on Germany's Eastern front, but it is too early to say what actual effect this decree may have.

Lest the German citizens should ever be inclined to adopt the wrong attitude to inferior foreigners, there is a constant stream of reminders from the German propaganda machine as to how they should behave, reminders that should be embarrassing in their blatant assumption of superiority. "The higher a nation stands racially", said Dr. Ley in a speech delivered on November 9, 1940, and quoted in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* on the next day, "the greater must be its requirements. The German needs more housing space and a better standard of life than the Poles and the Jews. If it should be asked by what right? the answer is, by right of self assertion".

Gau-obmann Bangert writing in the *Wirtschaftspolitische Parole* (December 20, 1942) asserted: "It is not in harmony with our national dignity that Germans should lend the foreign workers a helping hand or render them services, on the contrary the most humble member of our nation must be esteemed higher than the foreign worker".

The *National Zeitung* (February 13, 1944) warned German housewives that they must not oblige female Eastern workers employed in domestic service even by addressing letters for them.

Appealing to German women to take up war-work, the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* (March 4, 1944) assured them that they would only be called upon to do light work. "The heavy work will be done by Eastern women workers".

The privileged position of the "master race" is further stressed by the savage measures taken against any member of an "inferior race" who may try to assail it. The *Litzmannstaedter Zeitung* of August 20, 1942 states: "The Special Court at Wloclawek sentenced to death Zofia Dominiak, a 23-year old Polish woman working as a maid in the house of a German settler in Wyrow, Kutno. Her offence was that she slapped her employer's face".

Where German citizens have so far forgotten themselves as to treat foreign workers with anything like consideration, they have been punished by fines and imprisonment. The whole treatment of foreign workers in Germany is a perfect example of the *Herrenvolk* doctrine in action.

A writer in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (February 26, 1944) reproving Dutch workers for their attitude of "indifference and quiet opposition" made some damaging admissions about conditions in the labour camps in Germany where Dutch workers were kept. There are too few doctors and "doctors often show scepticism towards foreign workers who report sick. They know from experience that disease is often simulated in order to procure an extra holiday or exemption from labour. It is clear that the understandable prejudice of the doctors may sometimes lead to really serious causes of illness being overlooked".

Torture is part of the Nazi technique of punishing workers. The Swedish *Social Demokraten* (October 21, 1943) reports that Norwegian conscripted workers at Lista in Sorlandet where the Germans were building an airfield, were punished when they went slow or were "insolent" to the German foremen. The punishment was either one day's starvation or treatment in the torture chamber where they were undressed and hosed with ice-cold water under high pressure. Then they were placed upon a stove which was so hot that they had to keep on jumping to avoid burning their feet. And then came another ice-cold shower. The procedure was often continued until the workers fainted.

Less documented, but no less ruthless than the methods of their Axis partners, are those of the Japanese. At the end of 1942 it was estimated that they had collected five million Chinese labourers in North China and sent them to the North Eastern provinces and to Japan, where the shortage of manpower was acute. Arrest and round-ups are the favourite Japanese methods, but they also use as a



less direct method the puppet Hsin Min Labour Association which was set the task of recruiting two million Chinese workers in North China in 1942.

In the Philippines, compulsory registration and labour service have been decreed by the Japanese. In February, 1944, 8,972,900 persons between the ages of 16 and 60 were ordered to do one day's work a week without pay. In Burma they offered 1½ annas a day for labour to re-open the oil fields: before occupation the rate for equivalent work was 12 annas a day. In the few cases where they have succeeded in removing the Burmese for labour or military service the home of the absentee has been looted and his womenfolk raped.

Forced labour has been introduced in Java, imposed by such brutal methods as the flogging or decapitation of recalcitrants. In an effort to make the Netherlands East Indies self sufficient and to save their dwindling merchant navy the work of feeding the army of occupation, the Japanese have reduced the workers of Java to a standard far below their normal: they are allowed eight ounces of rice, soya beans and cassava root daily.

The two remaining partners in the Axis work on the same scheme. The doctrine of their racial superiority is the justification of their claim to world domination. Their efforts to attain this domination necessitate the collection of a vast number of workers. The collection of foreign workers allows the Axis to achieve some of its long term aims, such as the emptying of desirable areas into which Axis settlers can be sent with a view to its permanent incorporation in the master country, even if the war is lost; the weakening of hostile countries by breaking up their population into small groups scattered over enemy and occupied territory. So thoroughly have these peoples been tangled together, that only full United Nations cooperation can hope to sort them out and reunite the broken families. This is one of the tasks that faces the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

Secondary but "Nordic" nations might be permitted absorption into the German race and into that world which Hitler in *Mein Kampf* described as the true goal of German foreign policy . . . "when there will be 250 million Germans living on this Continent, not packed together". For less favoured nations the policy is equivalent to extermination. The labourer's work may be welcome, the labourer himself is not: hence the paradox of the valuable worker badly treated, hence the gas chambers and mass-graves for the Jews; hence the harsh treatment meted out to Russians, Poles and Czechs; hence the cruel blackmail of the "releve" for France, the man-hunts, the starvation and the crippling work.

If to us who are removed from the grim reality of such a policy it seems to be merely some evil dream, there are Hitler's own words to clinch it:

"We are obliged to depopulate as part of our mission of preserving the German population. We shall have to develop a technique of depopulation. I mean the removal of entire racial units. And that is what I intend to carry out—that, roughly, is my task. Nature is cruel, therefore, we too may be cruel. If I can send the flower of the German nation into the hell of war without the smallest pity for the spilling of precious German blood, then surely I have the right to remove millions of an inferior race that breeds like vermin? And by 'remove' I don't necessarily mean 'destroy'. I shall simply take systematic measures to dam their great natural fertility. For example, I shall keep their men and women separated for years. Do you remember the falling birth-rate of the World War? Why should we not do quite consciously and through a number of years what was at that time merely the inevitable consequence of the long war? There are many ways, systematic and comparatively bloodless, of causing undesirable races to die out". (*Hitler Speaks*, by Hermann Rauschning.)

## BELGIUM

From the early days of the occupation the Germans have tried to harness the Belgian people to their war machine, first by more subtle methods and later by official compulsion.



Until 1942 the German method for recruiting slave labour consisted of propaganda—promises of “gold and riches”—and of cleverly masked compulsion. The propaganda machinery made full use of the controlled radio, press and publishing houses, but few paid any attention to it. Indirect compulsion was by far the most dangerous weapon. There was already widespread unemployment owing to the lack of raw materials and the destruction of many factories. The Germans deliberately aggravated the situation by “rationalising” industry. Wages were fixed at the May, 1940 level, so that the rise in the cost of living reduced the Belgian worker to abject poverty, the workers’ pay could only be raised by 8 per cent. and the cost of living had officially gone up by 56 per cent. The food rations were lowered and fixed below a minimum subsistence level. The official rations only provided for 1,300 calories a day, sometimes the equivalent of only 900 calories was issued as against the 2,480 normally required for health. Unemployment allowances were refused to those who would not accept work outside their own trade. Many employers made great sacrifices by shortening the working hours in an effort to increase employment, but the Germans put a stop to this on October 6, 1942, by fixing a minimum 48-hour week. These tactics forced some 200,000 so-called “volunteers” (unless this figure includes dual registrations), out of a total working potential of 1,800,000, to take work in Germany during the first 29 months of the occupation. It is estimated, however, that about one-third of these conscripts escaped after the first six-month period, or failed to return from leave, in spite of the heavy penalties awaiting them if they were caught.

By 1942 Hitler’s patience was exhausted and Germany’s manpower problem was becoming increasingly acute. In October, therefore, an official decree was issued making all Belgian men between 18 and 50 years of age and all single women between 21 and 35 liable for slave labour in Germany. By February, 1943, at least 75,000 men and women were deported. They were replaced in Belgium by labour outside these age groups.

At first it was mostly the working class which suffered by this decree. German Labour Officers visited the factories, workshops, stores, shops and entertainment establishments, selected the workers they wanted, varying from 10 per cent. to 30 per cent. of the personnel, and despatched them to Germany within a few hours, or at the most, within a few days. The Belgian people are doing everything in their power to boycott the German effort: many have refused to report or have given inaccurate details; German files have been destroyed by the Underground movement, and even trains full of deportees have been stopped by gangs of patriots and the conscripts set free.

On November 11, 1942, the Germans began wholesale conscription of Belgians from all walks of life. People were rounded up in the streets, cafes and in other public places and handed a labour contract which they were forced to sign. Refusal merely meant that they would be given harder work and poorer pay. No special consideration was granted in cases of extreme hardship: supporters of large families or girls supporting their mothers were carried off along with the others. The age limits were often disregarded. At one time, as the result of pressure, the Germans had promised not to deport girls under 24 years of age, but they soon broke their word: in fact, girls of 16 and women of 50 have been sent to Germany. Conscription has been continued at a steady rate of 4,000 to 5,000 a week, in spite of underground resistance and although the Belgian Government in London has protested and reminded the German Authorities of the fate that awaits all war criminals. Belgian workers who have been forcibly incorporated in the Todt Organisation, are also being sent to Norway, France and the Channel Islands and, in the past, have been sent to the Ukraine, where this organisation builds German fortifications, and its members are more and more assimilated to actual soldiers.

The total number of Belgians conscripted for forced labour now stands at between 500,000 and 600,000, and of these two-thirds have been sent to Germany under the deportation measures. The number includes 60,000 women. Despite



official German decrees there have been instances of girls as young as 15 being deported.

The life which the Belgian conscripts lead and the work they are forced to do vary, but the conditions are always rigorous. On arrival they are herded together in camps for sorting—the slave markets they call them. Here they are visited by labour officers who inspect them, measure their size and estimate their strength. They are told to do any job at hand and switched over from one job to another or disposed of quite arbitrarily. Many have been sent to towns which are being bombed by the Allies. They have to work 10 to 11 or even 14 to 16 hours a day with only one Sunday off every fourth week or less and no holidays. Most of the women are engaged in maintenance work. The majority of the workers live in large camps under strict discipline and unsatisfactory hygienic conditions, and are subjected to brutal treatment. The moral standard is often low in the camps where women of all types are crowded together. Belgian and even German chaplains are refused access to the camps. Belgian workers in Germany and Belgium, like all foreign workers slaving for the Germans, have to hand over their ration cards to their employers to prevent them from escaping or changing their job. The food is quite insufficient and sometimes they have to cook grass for vegetables. A large proportion of the wages is swallowed by taxes, insurance and fines or needed to purchase extra food, so that little is left to send back to dependants in Belgium. Moreover the money earned by Belgian workers in Germany and paid to their dependants in Belgium is transferred through the clearing system; but as Belgian exports to Germany far exceed imports from Germany these payments amount to mere loans from Belgium to Germany.

The Belgians are as eager as all the other enslaved peoples to sabotage the German war machine; if possible perhaps even more so: the German occupation of 1914–18 is still fresh in their minds. Funds are collected to support those workers who escape or fail to report for conscription and to assist their families, and ration books are stolen from the Germans to enable them to obtain food.

## CHINA

China has been fighting aggression since 1931. She has been continuously at war with Japan since 1937, although she did not declare war on the Axis until the day after Japan's attack on Britain and the U.S.A. For the first four years she fought alone. China seemed so far away that the fate she was suffering did not always make a very great impression in Europe. Not until Europe herself began to suffer the effects of total war were the people of this hemisphere able to imagine what depths of human suffering were implied in the statement that 50,000,000 Chinese people had been rendered homeless. That statement, of course, did not mean that those 50,000,000 had lost their homes and nothing more. It meant that, in one way or another—by death, mutilation, torture, starvation, rape, slavery, etc.—these people had suffered at the hands of the Japanese oppressors. Today there are some 84,000,000 Chinese under Japanese rule. In addition a number estimated at 60,000,000, more than the total population of the British Isles, have migrated into free China.

China is far too vast an area, and the front lines too fluid, to give a comprehensive picture within the limited framework of this survey of how, and to what extent, the Japanese have enslaved the Chinese people. The best that can be done is to give some indication of the kind of world the Japanese have created in the Chinese part of the so-called "Co-Prosperity Sphere".

During the five years, from 1937 to 1942, the Japanese have collected five million Chinese labourers in North China and deported them to Manchuria or Japan. During 1942 the puppet Hsin Min Labour Association aimed at conscripting 2,000,000 people in North China; 1,500,000 to be sent to Manchuria, 150,000 to Inner Mongolia, 100,000 to Japan; and the rest for their labour in North China.

Chinese conscripts are divided into two categories, one for labour service and



one for military service. Able-bodied Chinese from 13 to 50 years of age are being pressed into military service. Whereas hitherto Chinese military conscripts have been used mainly for garrison duties in China and Manchuria, they are now being shipped to the South-West Pacific. This new policy may be partly the result of the frequent examples of mutiny among Chinese conscripted to fight their fellow countrymen. In the past, puppet units have repeatedly deserted wholesale and many Japanese officers attached to such units have been killed by Chinese conscripts.

Chinese women and children come within Japan's labour dragnet and many are forced to work on roads, railways and fortifications after their men-folk have been conscripted for the puppet army. There are verified cases of workers having been buried alive after working on projects considered to be military secrets.

Workers in the Kowchwan and Paichiachwang coal mines in the Shansi Province are not paid any wages and receive only a small basin of rice each day.

## CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The enslavement of the Czechoslovak people began soon after the Munich Agreement and has since gradually extended until its final completion in 1943.

The first official decree concerning general labour duties for people from 16 to 25 years of age was issued in July, 1939. In January, 1941, came an order making all people between 18 and 50 years of age liable to carry out "urgent work", and in December of the same year another order under which unmarried people could be directed to Germany. In a new order issued in May, 1942, all the hampering restrictions regarding age, married status and working duties were waived. The position was made perfectly clear by yet another order in 1943 when total mobilisation was introduced and all men between 16 and 65 years of age and all women between 17 and 45 were made liable for labour conscription. Old men and young girls were not spared. In spite of these obvious methods the Germans have had the audacity to say that one-fourth of the workers sent to Germany have been enrolled in accordance with what they describe as "voluntary contracts". To make this latest measure complete and effective the Germans ordered the closing down of all private business, financial and commercial undertakings and industrial concerns not engaged on war work.

The Czech people promptly got down to the job of sabotaging the scheme. Many refused to register; a still more effective measure was to fill in the registration forms inaccurately, creating chaos in the German archives.

Nevertheless, the Germans have been able to harness a large number of Czechoslovak men and women to their war machine. Some of the first Czechs to be deported to Germany were highly skilled workers whose jobs in the important Czechoslovak armament factories were taken over by German "overseers". Gradually the deportation was extended to include people of all walks of life and particularly intellectuals, whom the Germans feared would have a strong influence on the rest of the population.

With the total mobilisation order of 1943 the Germans began to round up practically the entire population of Bohemia and Moravia and today there is hardly a single family in these provinces which has not been broken up. In many cases whole families have been mobilised; the husbands, wives and the grown-up children being sent to labour camps, and the children between 10 and 16 years of age being put in Nazi youth camps.

A round-up in the streets is one of the Germans' favourite methods of seizing people in the occupied countries for forced labour in the Reich. It is carried out unexpectedly, at any hour of the day or night, and with great thoroughness. Two lorries are driven up one of the streets involved and turned broadside across the top to prevent traffic entering or leaving. As soon as they come to a standstill, uniformed, armed Germans leap out and form a cordon. The terrified pedestrians try to escape, only to find that the outlets from all other streets in the neighbourhood



are blocked in the same way. Trams which have been caught inside the cordon are stopped and surrounded while Gestapo men drag out the passengers. Then everyone within the area is forced to stand aside against a wall. After an hour or two, thousands of people have been seized. The Germans pack them into lorries and drive them away without giving them the chance of communicating with their homes. As the lorries drive along small pieces of paper begin to flutter into the street; on them are hastily written messages, such as "They have caught me in the street", and an address where the paper is to be delivered by any passer-by who picks it up.

The deportation of conscripts is carried out on a military basis. The fact that, however congested the German communications, they are always able to find transport for their slave workers, throws an interesting sidelight on the German manpower situation.

It is estimated that, by the end of 1943, more than 900,000 conscripted Czechoslovak men and women were working in Germany. There are five large Czechoslovak labour camps in Berlin and 25 in other industrial areas in Germany, including the Saar. There are 17 camps in Austria. Fortunately many Czechs managed to escape from two of these camps during the first Allied air raid on Wiener Neustadt and joined the Yugoslav guerillas. There are seven camps in France, including the heavily bombed St. Nazaire and Pas de Calais areas. Czechoslovak conscripts are also working in Norway, Yugoslavia and in Eastern Poland.

Czechoslovak workers, like most foreign workers in Germany, are usually housed in camps and billets. The workers are virtually imprisoned in the camps, which they are not allowed to leave without a special permit. They receive the same wages as the German workers "provided their output is the same". Payment of wages is often delayed and workers are subjected to numerous other inequalities. In some cases the labour camps are kept fairly clean and hygienic, not for the sake of the workers, but to avoid sickness, loss of workers and a consequent drop in output. Foreign workers are not admitted to hospital or any other health institution unless suffering from infectious diseases. Foreign women sent to Germany for slave labour receive only the minimum of social protection. Even in cases of childbirth they have far less privileges than the women of the "Master Race" enjoy in similar circumstances. The conditions in labour camps in the Protectorate and in other German-occupied territories is very similar to those in Germany.

The Czechs are not willing slaves and they can be relied on "to go very slow" and do as much harm as possible. Shells and guns made at the Skoda Works frequently explode when fired, killing the Germans and not the "enemy", and valuable parts of the machinery at these and other factories have an uncanny way of disappearing.

## FRANCE

The first French slave labourers were lured to Germany by the promise that a corresponding number of French prisoners of war would be repatriated. This is one of the meanest tricks as yet perpetrated by the Germans. Ten thousand odd Frenchmen, husbands, fathers and sons, sacrificed themselves so that another member of the family—a prisoner of war in Germany, perhaps seriously ill or wounded—could return home. The promise was not kept. To begin with some prisoners were released but only in the ratio of one prisoner for every three slave labourers. Those deported were strong and healthy; the prisoners released were ill, wounded or elderly. Then, gradually, the repatriation ceased altogether. The French soon realised what was going on and there were no more volunteers.

Another German method of obtaining labour is to set prisoners of war in Germany "at liberty" and to transfer them to German factories.

Gradually, Germany's need for labour both in France and Germany became more pressing. Having long aimed at sapping the strength of the French nation,



the Germans readily seized on this welcome opportunity of weakening the youth of France by overwork and under-nourishment. At the same time the deportees would serve as hostages.

In September, 1942, therefore, the Germans issued a decree placing all French labour at their disposal. This was followed by a more specific decree in 1943. In February, 1944, all Frenchmen between 16 and 60 years of age and all women between 18 and 45 were ordered to register. It is feared that this will result in a still more intensified drive to recruit slaves in France, and that, for the first time, women too will be generally conscripted. So far conscription in France has not been guided by age groups but by vocation and trade. For instance, chemists were amongst the first to be called up. Some firms have also been ordered to release a certain quota of their personnel for deportation to Germany.

As very few Frenchmen have willingly accepted deportation without a struggle, most of the workers have had to be secured by means of police raids and round-ups in the streets. Sixteen-year-old boys have been kidnapped in the open street in daylight. Whole villages have been surrounded by hundreds and even thousands of S.S. men, and able-bodied men, even agricultural workers, have been carried off. When 40 youngsters were rounded up for labour service in Italy, they were not permitted to send word to their parents or to collect any clothes or belongings. Seventy young men who had barricaded themselves in an abandoned farmhouse were attacked by 200 to 300 German troops and captured after a fierce struggle. The Germans compelled eighteen of the Frenchmen to lie down with their faces to the ground and machine-gunned them in cold blood. The wives of prisoners of war are lured to Germany with the promise that they will be allowed to join their husbands : a promise which, of course, is not kept.

But, in spite of the ruthless measures used by the Germans, the task of rounding up French slave labour is by no means an easy one. It is estimated that some 200,000 men have evaded call-up. Some 40,000 of these men are hiding and fighting in the countryside. Others live secretly in towns and villages. In some districts 99 per cent. of the potential workers have gone into hiding. They have no ration cards and, as to obtain work might attract the attention of the Gestapo or get their employers into trouble, they have to be supplied with faked ration cards and supported by the Underground Movement. Other members of their family are often conscripted in their place and, in an effort to track them down, letters received by their parents are examined.

As elsewhere in German occupied territories, the workers are transported in cattle trucks. Heart-rending scenes take place on the railway stations when mothers and wives take leave of their sons and husbands while the trains are lined with German guards to prevent the deportees from jumping off the train at the last moment. The women have even gone so far as to lie down on the tracks to prevent the trains from leaving.

The majority of Frenchmen sent to Germany are interned in camps very like prisoner-of-war camps—small wooden huts, bad sanitation, poor food, no medical attention, barbed wire fencing and even sentries. Moreover, unlike the prisoners of war, those in labour camps do not enjoy the protection and amenities offered by the International Red Cross. Relatives in France are unable to send relief in the way of food and clothes ; they have not got it to send. The camps are visited spasmodically by French inspectors from Vichy, but as the Vichy Government is always ready to make concessions to the Germans these visits do not result in any improvement.

The wages are poor. Some of the workers are allowed to send money to France to support their dependants but as their wages are very low and the cost of living in France has risen to well over 150 per cent. above the 1939 level, the allowances are quite insufficient.

The following letter from a worker in Germany gives a clear picture of conditions there :



"The contract for health service which I was forced to sign was thrown into the waste-paper basket . . . I began work on Monday from six in the morning until six at night. The following week I had to work from six in the evening until six in the morning. We only work and sleep".

And another letter from a French worker in Munich :

"Our wages are far lower than those of the German workers. One-third is deducted for taxes and we pay Rm. 1.70\* a day for 'accommodation and food'. Then there are the fines, for instance Rm. 3\* for being one minute late".

Many workers have been sent to concentration camps for insubordination or other alleged "crimes"; but that makes no difference, they still have to work for the Germans. A large number of French women in German concentration camps are also forced to work. For instance, at the Auschwitz camp where 300 women sleep in one room, where they are never allowed to change their clothes and underclothes, where there are three basins and one lavatory for each group of 500 women and where the daily food allowance consists of two bowls of clear soup a day, the women are forced to work 14 hours a day in the mines.

Once conscripted, sabotage amongst the workers is well organised. For instance, the French underground newspaper *Combat* in its issue of April 15, 1943, gave detailed instructions as to how, even in Germany, they can continue to work for their country and for victory. "All your efforts must be directed to this end", the paper tells the French workers.

## G R E E C E

The German attempts to secure labour from Greece have had comparatively little result: the Greeks have resisted; some of the occupying Powers, especially Bulgaria, have been more inclined to terrorise than to conscript the population; perhaps, too, the low standard of health caused by the severe famine in Greece has impaired the working capacity of the people.

The Germans' first attempt to enrol Greek labour was by straightforward propaganda methods. When these failed, however, they resorted to a more cleverly concealed procedure. In November, 1941, they formed Labour Battalions, ostensibly for the benefit of the Greeks, in districts where unemployment was particularly rife. They explained that those who joined would help to rebuild the ruined cities of Greece. It soon became clear, however, that all the Germans wanted was a labour pool from which they could draw when they wanted workers for their own defence installations.

During 1942 the Germans did not try wholesale conscription in Greece: they made use of political prisoners and the victims of occasional arrests. In March, 1943, however, they made a serious, though unsuccessful, attempt to force total conscription on the Greek people. They issued a decree making all Greek men between 18 and 45 years of age liable to deportation and labour conscription. This attempt was abandoned after a general strike had been called and after demonstrations in which 250,000 people took part, about 100 people, including many German and Italian soldiers, being killed in the fighting which resulted. Before being dispersed the demonstrators broke into the Ministry of Labour and made a bonfire of the conscription lists. It became known later that as a sequence to this incident the puppet premier, Logothetopoulos, had to resign and the recruiting officers were removed.

In addition to the "official" methods the Germans have, of course, made use of their usual weapons—artificial unemployment, starvation, arrests and reprisals. The following incident, which occurred in Crete in March, 1943, is a typical example of the various ways in which the Nazis recruit their slaves. A loudspeaker van pulled up in the centre of the town and when a sufficient crowd had gathered to hear what announcement was to be made, they were promptly surrounded and taken away.

\* A Reichmark is worth roughly 1s. 4d.



At one time in 1943 there were about 20,000 to 25,000 Greek workers in Germany, but it is difficult to assess the present figure as many have been repatriated. For instance, in July and August, 1943, two train-loads of Greek workers were sent back because the Germans were dissatisfied with their output and their "defeatist" activities.

In Italy there are very few Greek workers. The first batch of 1,126 hostages was taken there after the short-lived invasion of Greece in 1940. Since the occupation in 1941, another 1,400 Greeks, mostly political prisoners, have been sent to Italy, but some of them have since been released.

The Bulgarians have taken about 40,000 slave-labourers and deported them to Bulgaria and to that part of Yugoslavia which has been occupied by the Bulgarians, where they are employed on road construction. The conditions are said to be appalling.

The Bulgarians have been more concerned with getting rid of the Greeks than with exploiting their manpower. They want the territories they have occupied (Thrace, Macedonia and the islands of Thasos and Samothrace) to themselves, and have expelled 160,000 Greeks. This exodus has been brought about by various means, the most effective being the mass slaughter from September 28 to October 31, 1941, of some 25,000 Greeks in the Serres-Drama-Kavalla-Doxato region. Another device was the Bulgarian decree of June 10, 1942, by which the inhabitants of the Bulgarian-occupied territories had to opt for Bulgarian nationality or leave before April 1, 1943. Other methods consist of economic or other discrimination and the forceful removal of doors and windows from Greek dwellings.

Moreover, more than 1,000,000 Greeks are roaming the country destitute as the result of the devastation caused by military operations and the deliberate sacking of towns and villages.

Greek Jews are in a special category. Many have been deported. Four-fifths of the Jewish population of Salonika are estimated to have been deported to Poland, many of them dying as a result of inhuman treatment.

The conditions under which the conscripts work vary according to where they are and who are their masters. Moreover, accurate information on this subject is scanty, but the following two examples give a fairly good picture.

Out of 400 Greeks conscripted to guard the Athens-Salonika railway ten froze to death within fifteen days. Their dependants received no compensation.

In a letter to his family a Greek conscript in Germany wrote on August 20, 1942: "Please send me money and clothes. We are working fourteen hours a day. Our salary is insufficient to buy food, even from the peoples' kitchens". A few days later the German authorities informed the family that this worker had suddenly disappeared.

## LUXEMBOURG

A very large proportion of the population of Luxembourg has been deported, partly to give the so-called *Volk ohne Raum* more space (Luxembourg is only 999 square miles in area), but principally to exploit her manpower.

Germany took over the civil administration of Luxembourg in August, 1940; all employers and workers were forced to become members of the so-called "Labour Front" and have since had to apply to the German Labour Exchange in order to get employment. All the Labour Exchange has to do is to decide where the worker is needed—in Germany, Luxembourg or elsewhere. Other methods of forcing Luxembourg workers to go to Germany were also used, such as internment in concentration camps and "Political Re-education Schools" for those who were recalcitrant, and the confiscation of permits to work in Luxembourg.

Two months later, in October, the occupation authorities began to dismiss or deport teachers, University professors and civil servants, and to replace them by Germans. Later, a number of clergymen were sent to Germany, France and



Belgium. In April, 1941, a decree was issued making all professional people and civil servants liable to dismissal unless they were willing to declare their loyalty to Germany. As a result of this order a still larger number of officials, doctors, dentists, chemists, magistrates, teachers and people of other professions were rendered destitute and sent to Germany to mend roads and work in the quarries.

Under a decree issued in June, 1941, young girls and boys were forced to enrol in the "Labour Service". Under this camouflaged form of conscription, thousands of young boys and girls were sent to Labour Camps in Germany and the occupied countries. Many of the girls had to enter domestic service in Germany.

In August, 1942, the Germans announced the annexation of Luxembourg and the compulsory enrolment of Luxembourg men in the German army. "The presence of these people (the total population of Luxembourg is about 300,000) on the border of the Reich", said Simon, the German Gauleiter in Luxembourg, "constitutes a menace to the very existence of Germany". In protest against this proclamation a general strike was called throughout Luxembourg.

The deportations were immediately speeded up. Whole families, parents, children (even if married) and grandchildren, were sent abroad in batches at the rate of 50 to 100 families a week. The families of "deserters" from the army and those who evade labour or military conscription are amongst those deported. The widows and children of all patriots who are executed are automatically removed. The number of deported families and individuals has steadily increased. Recently a woman was made to leave her home and all her possessions and face life in a camp in the East, with her seven children, all under eleven years of age, the youngest a baby of only a few months. The fertile land and the comfortable homes of the deportees are taken over by "reliable" Teutons from Tyrol, and the less fertile regions of Germany. Sometimes the inhabitants of a home are deported merely because the property has struck the German occupiers as particularly desirable.

The deportees are divided into two distinct categories: those who are merely sent to an unknown destination somewhere in the East, and those who can be used in German war industries or in the labour gangs of the Todt Organisation engaged on defence installations. Only recently 1,200 miners were sent to the Brenner Pass and to Calais, to work on fortifications. Some of the "voluntary" emigrants are expected to settle on foreign soil. For instance, there is a camp for up to 150,000 "German" settlers in Silesia, where there is a daily death rate of 300. One group of Luxembourgers arriving in Silesia was surprised to find itself feted by an enthusiastic local population. They discovered that, on the previous day, the Nazi Party official had heralded their arrival with the following words: "These are men who have voluntarily left their country to settle on German soil". This was at least a repudiation of the German action officially incorporating Luxembourg in the Reich.

The German authorities in the areas to which a large section of the people of Luxembourg has been transplanted have declared that they intend all "settlers" to be employed as soon as possible. But their plans are not working out quite as smoothly as they may have hoped. The Luxembourgers are far from willing to work for their slave-drivers, and the Germans have had to appoint German supervisors to take the deportees in hand.

## NETHERLANDS

### HOLLAND

The story of the German attempts to recruit slave labour in Holland is the story of wit and bravery pitted against cold steel and savage brutality.

The Germans first tried indirect methods to recruit Dutch slave labour. Industry was placed under control and unemployment artificially created. The principal trade unions—the Union of Roman Catholic Workers, the Protestant



Workers Union and the Non-Denominational Union—were disbanded. A "Labour Front" was organised on the German pattern, under the control of one Nazi on the Fuehrer principle.

The next turn of the screw came through the rationing system, which was used to put pressure on all who refused to work for the Germans. Unemployment allowances, which would normally have been administered through the trade unions, became the concern of the German administration and were withheld from those who opposed the Nazis. To go on strike meant the complete withdrawal of ration cards.

When, following events in Russia, Germany's need for manpower grew more desperate, Hitler's scheme for the total mobilisation of manpower was extended to Holland. This was made known to the Dutch people by Seyss Inquart, German Reichscommissar for the Netherlands, in a decree issued on February 22, 1943. Infringement of this decree meant a fine of Fl. 100,000 or the death sentence. This step was followed by the re-arrest of Dutch ex-prisoners of war for reinternment in Germany. This slave drive led to a general strike throughout the country in May of that year.

The latest Nazi step towards the enslavement of the Dutch people was taken in February, 1944, when it was announced that Registration Bureaux "for the enrolment of girls in the Labour Service" were being set up in various parts of the country. One particularly unscrupulous trick, practised extensively by the Germans, is to promise Dutch women that if they volunteer for work in Germany they will be given work near their brothers, husbands or other relatives, from whom they have been forcibly separated. These promises are rarely kept. In fact, under present conditions of Allied bombing it is practically impossible for the Germans to keep them, but that does not prevent them from continuing to hold out such baits.

Against all these measures and decrees, backed by the whole might of the German armed forces, the Dutch are waging a vigorous battle. The German efforts have been obstructed in every possible way both by employers and workers themselves. It was reliably estimated in 1943 that 80,000 to 100,000 young Dutchmen had "dived under"—gone into hiding to avoid conscription or for other reasons—and the number of "divers" is steadily increasing.

According to the official statistics at the end of 1943, there were 380,000 Dutch workers in Germany and 40,000 in Belgium and Northern France.

These figures do not include those workers who have not returned for one reason or another, or those who have failed to come back from leave. They also do not include the 120,000 Jews who have been deported. Dr. Stothfang, one of Sauckel's closest collaborators, estimated the number of workers who have not returned from leave at 150,000.

The Germans have recently imposed a special regulation on Dutch workers in Germany for the purpose of putting an end to this "leave-vanishing" trick. As part of the routine, before a Dutch worker in the Reich can go home on leave, he has to submit, together with his application form, the names of two or more co-workers who will vouch for his return. If the worker fails to return, reprisals are taken against those who have stood surety. But even this unfair method has not succeeded in putting a stop to the practice or even in reducing the number of defaulters.

As a punishment for refusing to sign the pledge of loyalty, 4,000 students were sent to work in Germany. Efforts to conscript Dutch doctors for work in Germany failed as a result of the united stand which the whole medical profession took against such measures. Of the 120,000 Jews who were deported, tens of thousands are being employed in Labour Camps in the East.

The actual labour-yield which the Germans obtain from Dutch workers, either in Holland, or within the Reich, falls so far short of Nazi expectation, and even of the most indulgent minimum standard, that hardly a week passes without German press references to the subject.



## THE NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES

The Japanese methods in the Netherlands East Indies follow a similar pattern. The latest report received in London based on an investigation by official representatives in Australia of the Netherlands East Indies Government says: "Because of complete failure to get the economic situation in hand, forced labour has been instituted for the whole of the area, especially in outlying districts. All men capable of work are driven away like slaves to work in forests and swamps. The whip and the cane are used freely to convince the people they had better obey. In case of refusal bayoneting and shooting supplement these arguments".

## NORWAY

In the early days of the occupation of Norway, the German "protectors" tried to bribe the Norwegian workers with high salaries, using money taken from the Bank of Norway. Gradually, as these measures proved fruitless, the Germans discarded their "sheep's clothing", the workers were conscripted, their wages reduced, and working hours increased.

The first official decree making the men and women of Norway liable to be transferred to any undertaking certified as being of "vital national importance" was issued by the quislings on behalf of their masters in July, 1941. Many Norwegian labourers and office workers were conscripted under this decree. Once called up, they were forbidden to leave their employment on pain of imprisonment or even execution. Those conscripted were drafted to build barracks, roads, railways, airfields, and other military installations. Many Norwegian women were driven into fishpacking factories to cure and pack fish for export to Germany. By 1942, some 100,000 Norwegians had been conscripted.

As, with the growing might of the Allies, Germany's strategy changed from the offensive to the defensive, more workers were needed in Norway—this time to build the "west wall". In February, 1943, therefore, Quisling issued a new labour mobilisation decree making all Norwegian men between 18 and 55 years of age and all women between 21 and 40 liable for labour conscription. Simultaneously, it was announced that, as from April 1, 1943, the wages for labourers working on German undertakings would be reduced. This new decree barred the workers from seeking other employment. They had no free Trade Unions to protect them, and they had no choice but to accept, or be thrown into prison. If they went into hiding, they were deprived of their food rations, as they were compelled to deposit their ration cards with their employers. Thanks to the united resistance of the Norwegian people—failure to report when conscripted, the deliberate destruction by patriots of quisling archives, etc.—the actual amount of labour obtained has been far short of German expectations. On one occasion, when 65 iron workers were conscripted in Oslo for a German factory near Bergen, only three turned up. There were three large buses waiting to take the expected conscripts to the factory. The three workers entered a bus each, and drove off in state. Yet, it is inevitable that thousands of people should be unable to escape conscription, and to make more workers available the Germans have created an artificial glut on the labour market, by closing down numerous concerns and reducing the personnel of others by between 30 and 70 per cent.

Comparatively few Norwegians have been deported for slave labour. A few hundred skilled workers have been sent to Germany. Others have been selected from concentration camps in Norway and deported. A small number of lumberjacks have been sent to Finland. The rest are needed in Norway—as are many workers of other nationalities. Thousands of Russian, Polish and Yugoslav prisoners-of-war and political prisoners are forced to work on German installations in Norway.

Untold hardships have been suffered by many of the Norwegian conscripts. They are distributed throughout the length and breadth of the country and



frequently transported under the most appalling conditions; stowed into cattle trucks without food for up to 30 hours, or into the holds of coastal steamers for many days on end. Medical examinations are cursory, and on one occasion, when a cattle truck was emptied of its human cargo, thirteen of its occupants were found to be seriously ill with diphtheria. On board one steamer, where the conscripts were packed so tightly that they were hardly able to move, each group of five men daily received one loaf of bread, a piece of butter, a piece of sausage and some drinking water.

Conditions at the labour camps are no better. The barracks, or, at times, mere tents, are overcrowded, unhygienic, cold, and the workers receive a totally inadequate diet—a fact which has considerably increased the number of accidents. Healthy people are housed with prisoners who have arrived direct from the front, many of whom are diseased or verminous. These prisoners are particularly brutally treated and many have been deliberately murdered; Norwegians who are caught trying to communicate with them, a frequent occurrence, are severely punished. The workers have to work long hours, and those from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe are driven particularly hard. Young Norwegian girls, taken from offices, shops and farmsteads, and dragged away from their homes, are also forced to work for the Germans and even to clean their barracks. Those working at the fish-canning factories are billeted in barracks guarded by *hirdmen*, quisling stormtroopers. The workers are sometimes compelled to do Prussian drill or meaningless tasks, such as trimming heaps of coal to make them look "tidy". Even the quislings have to admit the appalling conditions prevailing at the labour camps. The Directorate for Employment wrote in the autumn of 1943: "It appears from the available information that the housing and sanitary conditions, at least in a number of places in the North, are very poor. The lack of clothing and boots is presumably also great amongst the conscripts and for some people it is stated that the position is quite critical . . . It must be assumed that a winter in the North with such poor living conditions and with such poor equipment and clothing will be a dangerous strain for many conscripts who are not used to manual work . . ." and the quisling "Ministry of Social Affairs": "As it appears impossible to expect any immediate and rapid improvement in these conditions now in winter-time, no alternative can be seen except to cease, until further notice, the conscription of persons to work in North Norway, and to release, as soon as possible, those who are conscripted and who cannot be offered reasonable conditions . . ."

Sabotage is an ugly word and not used openly in Norway. Sometimes it is called an "act of God"—sometimes "Nature's work". New roads cave in—or are swept away by avalanches; cars and machinery break down at most inconvenient moments, and the Norwegian workers have never been known to break any production records under the "New Order". In fact, the Germans have frequently had to send official complaints to many construction firms, accompanied by severe threats. As one worker has put it: "We work two hours for the Germans and six hours for King Haakon".

## THE PHILIPPINES

Exploitation of Filipino labour by the Japanese began with the Japanese occupation. In 1942 a Bureau of Employment was established to compile labour statistics and to introduce some system into the local labour market. Workers from thickly populated centres were gathered together and redistributed to areas that the occupying authorities had decided to exploit. For instance, to meet the growing Japanese demand for copra, many men were ordered from their homes to the copra producing areas.

College students, teachers, soldiers and even children; professionals and workers of every age group, all sources of labour were systematically tapped by the Japanese through their Bureau of Employment. It is reported by the Japanese-



controlled Manila Radio, that from the fall of Bataan to April, 1943, 15,000 Filipino soldiers had been put into employment in private firms through the Japanese military administration. These were principally firms privately owned by enemy nationals in Manila. One group of young Filipinos, including college graduates and teachers, was put to work on railway lines.

The employment of children was regulated through the Kalibapi, or National Service Association, organised in December, 1942, with the ostensible purpose of co-ordinating all economic activities and the services of individuals and organisations; one of the results of this "co-ordination" was that in March, 1943, 16,000 children of the poor were found wandering aimlessly in the streets of Manila.

By an Executive Order in May, 1943, the Bureau of Employment forbade any person, firm, or corporation to employ any worker or peasant who was not registered in the census of unemployed made by the provincial governors and city mayors; neither might such workers be used in any public construction work carried out by the Government.

A further labour control Ordinance, promulgated in September, 1943, established a Central Labour Union to collaborate with the Union of Japanese Employers in the Philippines.

The Japanese propaganda story that this compulsory labour service was to benefit the Filipinos through the attainment of economic self-sufficiency wore rather thin when it became apparent that those who resisted the Orders were subjected to tortures and imprisonment.

This illusion was further shattered when the people of the Philippines were told through Manila Radio on February 25, 1944, that 8,972,900 of them between the ages of 16 and 60 would be required to work without pay for one day each week according to a compulsory labour levy Order. All city and town mayors were directed to compel workers to devote one day of free labour to the numerous agricultural projects to be undertaken by the State.

In comparison with this estimate of 8,792,900 Filipinos ordered to give compulsory labour without pay in agricultural projects, it may be noted that in 1939, the total number of persons in all gainful occupations in the Philippines was about 8,400,000, of which agriculture claimed only 3,546,370. This enormous difference gives an idea of the individual hardships and displacements that must have taken place during the years of Japanese occupation when, under the guise of furthering Filipino independence, an entire population has been enslaved to improve Japan's war potential and her industry.

Faced by the growing United Nations advance in the South-West Pacific and Central Pacific, Tokyo declared on March 3, 1944, that the Philippines had become the first line of defence guarding French Indo-China and shouldering an important mission in the total defence of Greater East Asia. In view of this statement, the Japanese may be expected to intensify their efforts to recruit Filipino labour.

## P O L A N D

Poland was the first country, after the outbreak of the war, to become a slave reservoir for Germany, and it was here that the Nazi leaders first put their "Master Race" theory into practice.

Less than a fortnight after the fall of Warsaw, the western districts of Poland with an essentially Polish population of 10,740,000 were incorporated directly into the Reich as German territory intended for German settlers. The bulk of the population was deported to Germany for forced labour or crowded into the Government General, a sort of private German slave market. By the end of 1942, 1,800,000 Poles had been deported from the western districts. The second wave of mass deportation came in November, 1942, this time from central Poland—the Zamosc and Lublin districts and the Bug area and areas northeast of Warsaw. Whole villages were deported bodily from a strip 60 miles wide, cutting through Poland from north to south. As early as the end of December, 1942, 100,000 Poles had been deported from the Lublin district and 95,000



from areas northeast of Warsaw and by the end of March, 1943, 70,000 from the Zamosc district. This was another step forward in the deliberate German attempt to destroy the entire Polish nation. They were killing two birds with one stone. They were replenishing their slave reservoir and also forming a strategic line of defence against the Soviet Union.

The deportation of Poles was in part a wholesale scheme to facilitate conscription. The actual recruiting is done by various methods, none of them orthodox. Whole communities are rounded up. Regular man hunts are staged by the Gestapo who rope off certain areas and carry off all fit men and women within those areas. For instance, during Mass on Sunday a Church is surrounded by German troops and as the congregation come out of church they are driven into a courtyard at the point of the bayonet. A number of lorries arrive and the young girls are picked out and carried off for slave labour—or white slavery. The victims are then sent in groups to various transit camps (*Durchgangslager*) where they are medically examined and sorted. They are then sent to their future place of work.

Deportation and conscription are usually combined with confiscation of property. The conscript is given half an hour to get ready and to collect a few clothes and a little food. The deportees are mostly transported in sealed cattle trucks, packed to capacity. The greater part of the first series of deportations took place during the exceptionally severe winter of 1939-40. After a journey of several days in sealed cattle trucks, the people were dragged out more dead from cold and hunger than alive. Many were actually dead—frozen to death.

There are today a total of some 1,700,000 Polish slave workers (civilians and prisoners of war) including about 270,000 women (apart from girls abducted for German brothels) in Germany. Thousands of Polish women in concentration camps are also forced to do the manual labour. The German law for the protection of juvenile labour, and this is typical of Nazi brutality, does not apply to Polish children. In fact, in 1943, feeling the effects of their slave labour policy in Poland on the agricultural output required to feed German troops, the Germans issued an order making Polish children of 14 years of age and upwards, and from 10 to 14 years of age during the heavy seasons, liable to be conscripted for heavy labour on the land. Polish men and women between 18 and 55 years of age in the Government General are also forced to work for the Germans. They get no ration cards unless they register for labour.

Racial discrimination dominates the treatment of Polish workers. There must be no relation between the Poles and the Germans. Infringements are severely punished. The German regulation reads "It is the special duty of every patriotic citizen to keep the Poles strictly segregated from the German household".

One regulation forces them to indicate their nationality by certain outward and visible signs, as, for instance, a distinguishing badge. Any Pole who fails to comply with this regulation is liable to a fine of Rm. 150 or up to six weeks imprisonment. The Germans adopt the attitude that there is no place for the Poles in the German social legislation—" *Der Pole steht ausserhalb der Betriebsgemeinschaft* " (The Pole is outside the factory trade union group). On arrival in Germany workers are, as a rule, assigned to work in groups. If they are recruited separately to work in one factory, it is laid down that, if possible, Poles shall be housed separately in isolated barracks "specially built for the purpose". If there is no separate accommodation for Poles in the district it is the duty of each German employer to isolate the Poles from the rest of the household. Sexual intercourse between Poles and German women is forbidden and any Pole who commits this "crime" is liable to the death sentence.

There are a host of other regulations applying to the Poles. They are not allowed to avail themselves of public transport facilities without special permission from the police. They are not allowed to use a bicycle to or from their work unless they have a special identity card issued by the police. Under no circumstances are the Poles allowed to change their place of work. They cannot attend Divine Service at the same time as Germans and are forbidden to enter certain



public places. Poles must work at piece-rates, and those working in war industry receive the lowest category of these rates. It is forbidden to allow Poles accommodation free of charge. In Germany, family and children's allowances are measures intended to serve the German population policy and naturally it would be contrary to that policy to grant them to Polish workers; therefore the payment of such allowances to Poles is expressly prohibited, nor are they entitled to any taxation reliefs. One of the latest regulations effecting the Poles abolishes all holidays. They must work without holidays for the duration of the war owing to the "problems of war economy and the demands on war transport".

## U. S. S. R.

Many hundreds of thousands of Soviet prisoners of war and civilians—men, women and even children—have been forcibly deported to Germany, to work in German war industries or for individual German citizens to whom they have been virtually sold as slave markets for Rm. 10–15 each.

In November, 1941, a secret conference was held in Berlin at which Reichsmarshal Göring gave instructions to his officials concerning the use of Soviet citizens for forced labour in Germany. The following are some excerpts taken from these instructions:

"Russian workers have proved their ability in the construction of the mighty Russian industry. Now they must be put to use for Germany . . . The Russians must be used first and foremost on the following kinds of work: mining, road-building, war industries (tanks, guns, aeroplane parts, agriculture, the building of work-shops, boot factories, etc.) . . . In applying measures for the maintenance of order, speed and severity are the guiding considerations. Only the following punishments should be employed, without any intermediary less severe stages: deprivation of food and the death sentence by the decisions of courts-martial . . . The utilisation of Russian civilian workers and their treatment should not differ in practice from the utilisation of war prisoners and their treatment . . ."

These instructions were followed in April, 1942, by a secret circular issued by Fritz Sauckel, newly appointed Chief Commissioner for the Utilisation of Labour Power. The following is an extract from this circular:

"In addition to the war prisoners already taken and still in the occupied regions, it is chiefly necessary to mobilise in the Soviet regions the civilian skilled men and women workers over 15 years of age, to be used for work in Germany . . . In order to free from their work the very much occupied German peasantry, the Fuehrer has instructed me to deliver to Germany 400,000 to 500,000 picked, healthy, strong girls from the Eastern regions".

At the same time Sauckel kept urging his recruiting agents to greater efforts. On March 31, 1942, he sent them the following telegram:

"The recruitment for which you are responsible must be speeded up by all possible means, including the most severe application of the principle of forced labour . . ."

Sauckel's agents have surpassed themselves in the use of inhuman methods in recruiting Soviet citizens. Those who refuse to report when called up, and that applies to practically all Soviet citizens, are deprived of all means of existence. Starving people are enticed to railway stations on the pretext that bread will be distributed. When a sufficiently large crowd has gathered, they are simply packed into waiting trains and taken away. When the Soviet people ceased to be taken in by these tricks, the Germans fixed quotas of workers to be produced by each town and rural district. As the supply of able-bodied men and women became exhausted, the Germans began to round up even the sick and disabled, until now anyone from 12–60 years of age is conscripted. Of 5,419 Soviet citizens deported



for slavery from the Gzhatsk district, 624 were children of less than 14 years of age. By January, 1943, 710,000 Soviet citizens had been deported from the Ukraine alone for slavery in Germany, according to the local German newspaper, *Deutsche Ukrainer Zeitung*.

The resistance of Soviet citizens to conscription for forced labour has become increasingly well-organised and effective. The Soviet Government is in possession of a report by the Head of the Political Police and Security Service attached to the S.S. leader in Kharkov, which contains a revealing admission concerning the resistance in that area between July and September, 1942. It says:

"The recruitment of labour power is giving cause for disquiet to the appropriate institutions on account of the extremely negative attitude to be observed amongst the population . . . At the present time everyone does his utmost to avoid recruitment—feigning sickness, taking to the woods, bribing officials, etc. As for voluntary despatch to Germany, that has been completely out of the question for a long time".

To combat this resistance the Germans classify all who evade recruitment for Germany as "guerrillas" and treat them accordingly. They send punitive expeditions to districts which have not fulfilled their quotas and sack entire villages, shooting hundreds of people. In December, 1942, 65 railway workers in Poltava were hanged for refusing to go to Germany.

Soviet citizens who have been rounded up are crowded into stables, sheds, and dug-outs to await despatch to Germany, and are then loaded into cattle-trucks, 60 to 70 persons in each truck. The exhausted and sick are thrown off the trains and the railway tracks to the west are lined with bodies and skeletons of Soviet citizens. The following are a few eye-witness accounts of the conditions under which the workers are transported:

"In the unheated goods trucks we were packed so tightly that it was impossible to turn round . . . We were starved all the way . . ." "We were not allowed to go out . . . Time and again we were man-handled by the German sentry. In Lvov we were disembarked. Here we were inspected by a special committee. In the presence of soldiers we were stripped naked and our bodies were examined . . ." "Our journey lasted 12 days and nights. On September 18, 1942, we arrived at the German town of Halle. When we arrived we were lined up and German ladies began to choose their slaves from among the girls . . ."

Soviet citizens forced to work in Germany are treated as sub-human. They have to wear special distinguishing badges. The Russians wear a badge with a white border with the word "ost" in the centre. The Ukrainians wear a similar badge with a yellow border. They are forbidden to leave the camps and are deliberately put on a starvation diet. Goering says in his statement of November, 1941: "The Russian is not particular. That is why it is so easy to feed him without noticeable alteration in our food balance. He should not be spoilt or accustomed to German food." "The Russians" says the German newspaper *Frankfurter Zeitung* on April 17, 1942, "brought from the Kharkov region to Germany, should, of course, be treated harshly and kept under strict surveillance, for there is no guarantee at all that there are no Bolsheviks amongst them capable of acts of sabotage. Their immediate chief should maintain his prestige with the aid of the knout". The following are a few eye-witness accounts of the treatment meted out to Soviet slaves in Germany:

"The other day, my neighbour bought a housemaid. She paid her money through the cashier and was given the opportunity of choosing any woman to suit her taste, from a party of women just driven in from Russia . . ." "I and 16 other girls were sent to the town of Swartz. Here there was a regular trade in Russian people. Germans, men and women, turned us about, measured us, and fingered us. I was bought by Karl W., a baker. He forced me to work from 6 a.m. till late into the night. Although I lived at the bakers', I seldom ate bread . . ." "I worked for a German woman. Absorbed in my work and



in gloomy thoughts, I failed to notice that the milk on the stove had begun to boil over. The kitchen was filled with the smell of burning milk. The infuriated lady rushed into the kitchen, snatched the pot with the remains of the milk, from my hands, and splashed it in my face. I fainted. I came to in hospital in unbearable pain, and in utter darkness. I was blind . . .”

## YUGOSLAVIA

The Axis has not been able to extract many workers from Yugoslavia. The total number of workers available is far smaller than before the war. A large proportion of the male population is still kept in prisoners of war camps; many have been killed in fighting or by Axis executioners; many have joined the Yugoslav guerrilla forces. In order at least to maintain foodstuff production, as well as to increase the production of oliferous plants for the Axis war machine, by far the greatest part have had to be kept on the land.

Nevertheless, the Axis has managed to extract some slave labour from Yugoslavia. One means of achieving this has been the annexation of Yugoslav territory and the enrolment of the inhabitants into the Axis war machine. Italy had already in 1920 annexed what was virtually Yugoslav territory; after the occupation of Yugoslavia in 1941, it added to this the Slovene province of Ljubljana and parts of the Adriatic coastal regions. Other parts of Slovenia have been annexed by Germany and still others by Hungary, which also took the important province of the Banat; while Bulgaria and Albania each seized a part of Southern Serbia and Serbia proper. These new owners treated the inhabitants as part of their own people, even going so far as to try enrolling their new subjects into their armies. All who resisted these attempts have been driven into labour gangs.

In addition to conscription by annexation, the Axis has used its ordinary methods of persuasion and force, combing the whole country with such effect that agricultural production has reached a new low record. The Croats were treated to the usual propaganda campaign. They were even addressed as “allies” and promised high wages, which have never materialised, as the wage conditions for all Yugoslavs in Germany are identical. In Serbia the help of the Nedyk administration has been enlisted to entice labour volunteers through its agricultural reconstruction plan. Every device has been used to recruit labour from among the occupants of prisoners-of-war camps. The result of these efforts, however, remained insufficient to keep Yugoslav industry and production at the required level. It therefore became necessary in 1943 to call up male inhabitants of “Occupied Serbia” between 23 and 30 years of age as labour conscripts, particularly for the Bor copper mines. A decree promulgated in 1941 had already made all men of between 17 and 45 years of age liable to compulsory labour for a period of six months. In the Bor mines labour camp, it may be noted, the smallest offence against camp discipline involves a minimum punishment of three months additional forced labour, making the order for most men equivalent to perpetual enslavement.

It is not known how many Yugoslavs are doing forced labour within Yugoslavia, in Germany or other occupied territory, for the Axis, but the following figures give some indication. Of a total of 350,000 prisoners-of-war, 100,000 on December 31, 1942, according to a German labour paper, were already working in Germany. About the same number of Yugoslavs from the so-called “independent” Fascist Croat State were also working in Germany, making a total in 1942 of at least 200,000 men and women.

The conditions of the workers vary in different parts of Yugoslavia and conditions also vary in the different countries to which the workers are deported. Yugoslav political prisoners during rigorous forced labour in Norway have been treated with particular brutality. The collapse of Italy definitely added to the sufferings of Yugoslav prisoners still in northern Italy. All Yugoslavs in Germany receive exceptionally low pay: whereas Finnish and Danish workers in Germany are



allowed to send home Rm. 250 per month if married, or 125 if single, and Bulgarian and French workers 160 or 120, Yugoslav workers can send home only Rm. 100 if married, or 80 if bachelors. Nutritional standards both in Yugoslavia and elsewhere have fallen very low.

It is interesting to note that the original Axis plan for Yugoslavia, however ingenious, being constructed on a false premise, has broken down. It was intended to make a fundamental distinction between the two major parts of Yugoslavia. Whilst a truncated Serbia was to be, and indeed has been, subjected to a savage armed occupation and brutal repression, "independent Croatia" was to be treated as an ally, in an attempt to exploit past Croatian dissatisfactions. In the result, however, the attitude of all Yugoslav workers has been so much the same that the Axis has come to treat them all alike, paying them the same wages and subjecting them to the same conditions.

*This Statement is the eighth of a Series which has been prepared by representatives of the Allied Governments in London and issued by the United Nations Information Organisation (formerly the Inter-Allied Information Committee). The first seven were :—*

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